

A BLUEGRASS NEW TO OHIO: *POA SALTUENSIS* FERN. & WIEG.

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Pasture bluegrass (*Poa saltuensis* Fern. & Wieg.), a northern species which ranges from western Ontario and Minnesota to eastern Quebec, southward through northern and western New England to northern Maryland and West Virginia (Fernald 1950), has been discovered recently in northeastern Ohio in Chardon Township, Geauga County. *P. saltuensis* is a species of open woods, thickets, and recent clearings (Fernald 1950). The Ohio specimen (Bissell 1984: 23) was collected on 23 May 1984 just below a bluff rim of an eroding, south-facing clayey slump along the west valley wall of Big Creek just north of the corporate limits of Chardon. A duplicate of the museum specimen has been annotated by A. A. Reznicek at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

A diligent search for additional occurrences of *P. saltuensis* was made on similar slumping valley walls of the Chagrin River to the west of Chardon and slumping valley walls of the Grand River to the east of Chardon during 1985 and 1986. However, no additional Ohio records for *P. saltuensis* were discovered.

P. saltuensis is fairly common in adjacent Pennsylvania, occurring across the northern portion of the state except the extreme northwestern counties, and extending south through the state on the Appalachian Mountains (Wherry et al. 1979). This newly discovered Ohio locality of *P. saltuensis* is about 90 miles west of its westernmost occurrence in Pennsylvania (Wherry et al. 1979). Within Michigan *P. saltuensis* is confined to the Upper Peninsula and central and northern Lower Peninsula with a disjunct county occurrence in Allegan County on Lake Michigan in the southern lower Peninsula (Voss 1972).

P. saltuensis is uncommon at the single Ohio locality, growing in partial shade on the upper slump face just below a forested bluff rim. Several breaks occur on the forest along the bluff rim. The most dominant tree along the bluff rim is white oak (*Quercus alba* L.), with a few scattered beech (*Fagus grandifolia* Ehrh.). Shrubs associated with *P. saltuensis* include buffaloberry (*shepherdia candensis* L.), leatherwood (*Dirca palustris* L.), witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana* L.) and maple-leaf viburnum

(*Viburnum acerifolium* L.). The most common herbaceous associates of *P. saltuensis* at the site are longstalked sedge (*Carex pedunculata* Willd.) and wreath goldenrod (*Solidago caesia* L.).

P. saltuensis is similar to another species of bluegrass (*Poa languida* Hitchc.) (Gleason and Cronquist 1963) which does occur in northeastern Ohio (Braun 1967). The length of the ligules in *P. saltuensis* runs between .6 and 1.5 mm (3 mm), while ligule length in *P. languida* ranges between (2.1 mm) 2.4 and 4 mm (Voss 1972). The margins of the lemmas in both species are glabrous (Voss 1972). *P. saltuensis* has acute or acuminate, distinctly 5-nerved lemmas, while *P. languida* has obtuse, obscurely nerved lemmas (Gleason and Cronquist 1963). Another species of bluegrass (*Poa cuspidata*), common throughout the eastern half of Ohio (Braun 1967), grows in habitats similar to the *P. saltuensis* habitat in Chardon. Many of the northeastern Ohio *P. cuspidata* specimens in the CLM herbarium contain the label comment: "in partial shade on eroding upper slopes just below bluff rim." The keels of the lemmas of *P. cuspidata* are pubescent in contrast to the glabrous keels of *P. languida* and *P. saltuense* (Fernald 1950).

References

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